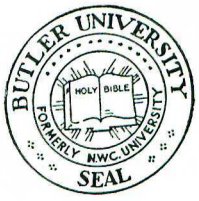
Manuscripts

Fall 1979



Manuscripts

Butler University

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MSS
FALL 1979

BUTLER
UNIVERSITY
Office of The
President

November 16, 1979

Editors
MANUSCRIPTS
English Office
Jordan Hall
Butler University

Dear Editors:

I am anxious to read your next issue of Butler's award winning literary magazine. It speaks well of the University to produce such fine and promising literary works, and I trust this issue will continue that long-standing tradition. Your task presents a challenge, but the fruits of your labor should prove its worth. Put me down for a copy of MSS.

Cordially,

John G. Johnson

John G. Johnson
President

JGJ:ph

4600 Sunset Ave. Indianapolis 46208 · Phone · 317 · 283 · 9201

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Special Thanks to Mr. Robert K. Stalcup, Jr.

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Manuscripts is published by the English Department of Butler University once each semester. The material is written mainly by students of the Freshman English, the Advanced Composition, the Creative Writing, and Writers' Workshop classes.

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* Freshman Work

OPTIMISM

Nathan W. Harter

Natural

Let nothing keep the morning from your vision!
Go and breathe deeply autumn's evening air:
The ling'ring blend of heaven's blue transition,
The moist and mellow breezes in your hair,
For man alone can reach the realm Elysian.

Embrace the ocean for its constancy;
Extoll the stars in every sector found;
Wrestle with winds which storm in liberty;
And listen to the thunder's solemn sound—
A world of nature's own fraternity.

How could the sky be thought a prison wide?
What chains in forest, field, or garden grow?
This mortal passage would be sanctified
Were not its leaving got in grief and woe,
Were we not fearful of death's other side.

Brief pardon, life, whose broad, unfettered lease
Awaits each man in measure of his years.
Surrender to its momentary peace
And suffer not the idleness of tears,
For soon the vision fades and wonders cease.

Preternatural

The morning rises with a heavy frost,
And autumn's beauty is the veil of death.
In nature's chains my soul is lone and lost,
Sustained the while by damp, polluted breath
Which swells the breast with living's awful cost.

The ocean swallows-up its mortal food,
And stars elude our striving for their light.
In stagnant space, this world of solitude
Pretends to day in blackest, blackest night—
Most cruel fate! most painful interlude!

These hands, for grasping not an ecstasy;
These eyes, for finding nothing of the Lord;
This heart, for knowing not a constancy;
Would make a prison of this earthly ward,
Would make of death a welcome liberty.

So, therefore, pray that God deliver you,
That His redemption solace you in life;
Resign yourself to earth's brief rendezvous,
And try to spare your children this world's strife
In everything your captive soul can do.

OAK STREET

Sue Ferreira

As the days grew warmer and May slipped into June, I knew that soon it would be time to go to Oak Street. When I was six or seven, I looked forward to Oak Street as much as I anticipated my birthday or Christmas. To me, Oak Street was more than just Grandma and her house; Oak Street meant endless summer days of playing with cousins, climbing trees, learning to sew, or just listening to tales told by Gram or Aunt Della. As soon as school ended in June, Mother shipped me off to Oak Street where I spent many summer weekends escaping from Mattel and Mickey Mouse.

My memories of Oak Street are a collection of sultry July afternoons spent with my cousins. Usually there were four or five of us together for a weekend at Gram's, and every member of the group had a tan, knobby knees, at least three Band-aids, and a pink moustache from drinking Kool-aid. The only characteristics that distinguished the girls from the boys were our bobbing pigtails and the boys' stubby crewcuts. We were affectionately known to everyone on Oak Street as "Kate's Kids."

There was no doubt that Gram's house and yard made an excellent playground. Sometimes we'd spend hours as courageous explorers who thrashed through the lilac bushes and evergreens with pretend machetes. We would brave all sorts of dangers such as camouflaged thistles, "prickers," mosquitoes, and the old witch next door. If one of us became wounded on an expedition, Gram would act as our "medic" and calmly patch up the scratched knee or cut finger, kiss the wounded firmly on the cheek, and send him back out into the wilds.

Another favorite pastime was collecting mulberries that fell from Gram's old gnarled tree. We called them "mayberries" after Mrs. Mayberry, a good friend and neighbor of Gram's, who was as rosy and plump as they were. Each one of us would steal a Tupperware bowl from the kitchen and once we had a substantial pile of berries, would sit on the front porch swinging our legs and mashing the berries with a stick to make "Mayberry jam."

The old house itself also gave us hours of pleasure. There were drafty walk-in closets just right for hiding in, and secret doors which led you to the basement to discover only Gram's washer and dryer. On the

second floor a long, graceful staircase cascaded to the first level with a slick bannister which was constantly polished by our bottoms. But I must admit that my favorite part of the house was the tiny attic off the second floor bathroom, where I would often go to be alone. It was a magical place that smelled of lavender and old books, but with a mere wish it could become the throne room of a Queen or a huge, grassy meadow with a horsehair rocker as my stallion. Sometimes Gram would come in at night and find me asleep on my steed after a long day. She would waken me gently and I would curl up in her wide lap as she rocked in time to the crickets' chirping. We'd sit and talk about anything and everything until the moon slipped behind the clouds, and then it was time for bed.

But the best part, the very best part about Oak Street was Story Time. On a hot Sunday evening after all the dishes were washed and put away, my cousins and I would gather on the big front porch glider with our popsicles. In the hazy twilight we'd hear Aunt Della's slippered footsteps as she'd shuffle over to the glider and ease herself down next to us. We'd snuggle up to her soft bosom and she'd say, "All right now, what story would you like to hear first?"

"The goblins'll get you!" We'd reply in unison. Aunt Della would adjust her glasses and tip her head back so that her nose was a shiny hook in the twilight. The glider would begin to swing back . . . and forth, back . . . and forth, until it began to lull us to sleep with the rhythmic chirping of the crickets. Aunt Della would start the story in a soft, low voice, and as the tale grew and grew her voice built with it:

"Once there was a little boy who wouldn't say his prayers.
And when he went to bed that night a-w-a-a-a-a-y upstairs—
His mammy heard him holler
And his pappy heard him bawl.
But when they turned the kivvers back,
He wasn't there at all!
They seeked him in the chimney flue,
The cubby hole and press.
They sought him in the rafter room,
And everywhere I guess.
But all they ever found of him
Was his pants and little roundabout—
And the goblins'll get you!
If you don't watch out!"

"Oh!" we'd all scream, and invariably someone would drop his popsicle in the excitement. "Tell us another," we'd beg Aunt Della. "Tell us 'The Big Toe' or 'The Crooked Mouth Family.' ".

It was usually at this exact moment that Mother would drive up in the station wagon to claim us.

"Hi kids!" she'd call. "Ready to go now?" And suddenly the magical spell was broken. We'd untangle ourselves from Aunt Della with a last good-bye hug and kiss for her and Gram. And that was the end of a weekend at Oak Street.

I'm sure that we all counted the days until we could go back to Oak Street. I still go there today, but not half as often as I did during those summers when I was six or seven. My cousins and I don't grab a popsicle from the freezer anymore, or fight over who will sit by Aunt Della.

Now Gram and Aunt Della are old, like the house, and talk of leaving Oak Street soon. I hope they don't, because I'd like my little girl to grow up spending summers making "Mayberry jam" and hearing stories on the front porch as she drips popsicle juice and snuggles up to her favorite aunt on a warm summer's evening.

GRANDFATHER BYRNE

Cindy A. Rust

The smell of medicine and anaesthetics hung heavily in the air. Men and women in white uniforms rushed expressionless up and down the corridors. The stiff lace of my Sunday dress itched horribly. I didn't like this place. It was scary. I just wanted to see Grandfather. My desperate pleading to my parents had resulted in my being placed on an old gray sofa in the hall, away from the grown-ups. Why couldn't I see him?

Mother had told me Grandfather Byrne was dying. I understood that. I just wanted to see him. The grown-ups said that he was different and that he might not even know who I was now. That couldn't be! He wouldn't be different. He was still Grandfather. He would know me. . .

One hot summer day, Grandfather and I took a walk through the woods by the farm to look for treasure he said the pirates forgot they had hidden in Indiana and had left behind.

"We should search by the pond first—that's where all pirates hide their treasures. You go look and I'll stand guard," he said.

He was so smart. Well, it seemed as if I searched forever, while Grandfather stood guard, but I couldn't find the treasure. I let out a long sigh of discouragement. A long deep chuckle rolled from his chest and past his loving smile.

"Come on, Cinnie An Wutts—let's have a seat and think this whole thing out. We really shouldn't give up, but we deserve a rest."

Grandfather always called me "Cinnie An Wutts" instead of Cindy Anne Rust like everybody else. He said "Rust" sounded funny. The best kind of names started with an "O" like O'Byrne, he thought. That made me laugh. I asked him if he didn't think that O'Rust sounded even funnier.

"No—just more Irish," he said with a wink.

Lots of times he would sit and not say a word, but other times he would say so many important things that it was hard keeping up with him.

"You know it's too bad about your face—what's it like to have a nose right in the middle of your face, you funny lookin' kid, you."

And so we sat on the plush green moss by the pond and talked about all the important things like bugs, Christmas, and why the sky is blue and stuff.

Would he remember that day? I wondered. Mother came back out to the hall.

"Can I see him now?" I pleaded.

"Maybe you can see him in a while—he isn't doing very well so we will have to wait and see," Mother said.

I repressed my desires to pester her about how long "a while" was.

I was always being told to wait a while. I remember one Easter spent at Grandfather's house. That time I refused to wait a while. On Easter morning, I tiptoed softly into Grandfather's bedroom and then ever so carefully pounced on him demanding to begin the hunt for the eggs IMMEDIATELY! He shot upright and quickly drew his finger to his lips.

"SHHHHHHHHHHHH! It's too early—it is before the dew has dried, so the rabbits are still playing Bite-Ear."

Needless to say, I wanted to know what this Bite-Ear game the rabbits played was.

"Well, Bite-Ear happens every morning when all the rabbits come out of the woods and meet in the field by the house. They jump up and down wildly trying to bite each other's ears without having their own ears bitten. I discovered this Bite-Ear business when I had gone out one morning, before the dew had dried, and found myself in the middle of all of those rabbits trying to bite each other's ears. Cinnie An Wutts, I feared for my life but mostly for my lobes! I was defenseless because the rabbits were too small for me to bite back!"

I decided he was right and that the Easter egg hunt could wait until the morning's Bite-Ear was completed and the rabbits had returned to the woods. So I went back to bed and waited.

But I didn't want to wait any more. I wanted to see my Grandfather.

"Please Mother, now?"

"All right," she said softly, "now."

I felt anxious but frightened. Would he remember my name, the summer day, or Bite-Ear? Please God—Grandfather couldn't have forgotten me, could he?

A man in white pushed open the tall swinging door to his room. My knees were quivering and my mouth was dry. I drew to his bed. It was surrounded by large silver machines with flashing lights and lots of knobs and switches. He lay quietly in the big, white bed and didn't move. They had put tubes in his nose and arms and clear stuff oozed in and out of them. I reached out and took his hand.

"Grandfather? Grandfather, can you hear me?"

Slowly his eyes, encircled with wrinkles, opened and looked dreamily at me. Then a faint but sturdy voice murmured—

"Hey, Cinnie An Wutts, promise me that you'll keep looking for that treasure and watch out for those rabbits. . . ."

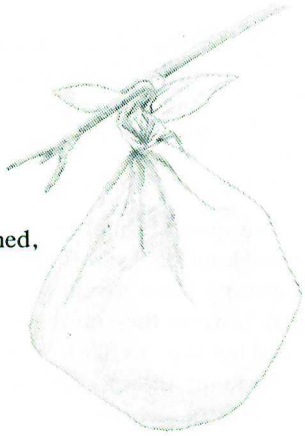
I nuzzled my head on his chest.

"I will Grandfather—I love you!"

Grandfather Byrne is dead now. But memories of him, pirate treasure, nicknames, and Bite-Ear will live in my heart forever.

THE RAQUETTEUR AND TREES
(In Quebec a raquetteur is a traveler on snow-shoes)

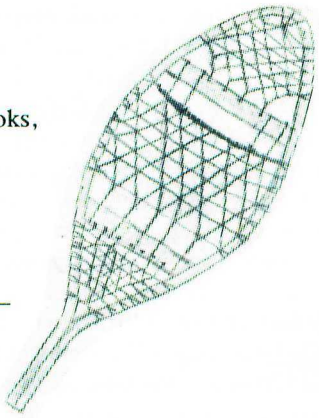
Tanya Beyer



The Raquetteur he touched the country—
Mobbed by wildwood,
Steeped in snowpack,
Hiding aid about the shadows—
Free for raquetteurs.

Ash youngsters, chosen, curved and fastened,
Webbed with leather
Fed from Alder,
Made the Raquetteur his hare's-feet—
Buoyant over leagues.

The Paper Birch wore clever fabric;
Posing kindly
White-bark tinder
Which the Raquetteur by sunset
Peeled to serve a flame.



And Balsam stood in windless woods-nooks,
Rife with branches
Lapped and latticed
This as tent and rippling bough-bed
Lodged the Raquetteur.

In noiseless hosts the Trees made offers—
Humble hundreds
For most cravings.
Thus the Raquetteur in comfort
Gave salute to Trees.

JANET

J. D. Daubs

From *Time* magazine, "Milestones" column, October 1978:

> DIED. Janet Flanner, 86, the New Yorker's Gênet whose "Letter from Paris" was a feature of the magazine from 1925 to 1975; of pneumonia; in New York . . . .

I suppose she had to die sometime, but I never really expected to see it. I also know that someday the Arc de Triomphe will crumble, but if I'm still around I don't want to be told about it. I want to remember it as I saw it last, in the summer of 1975, the year in which Janet Flanner penned her last "Letter from Paris."

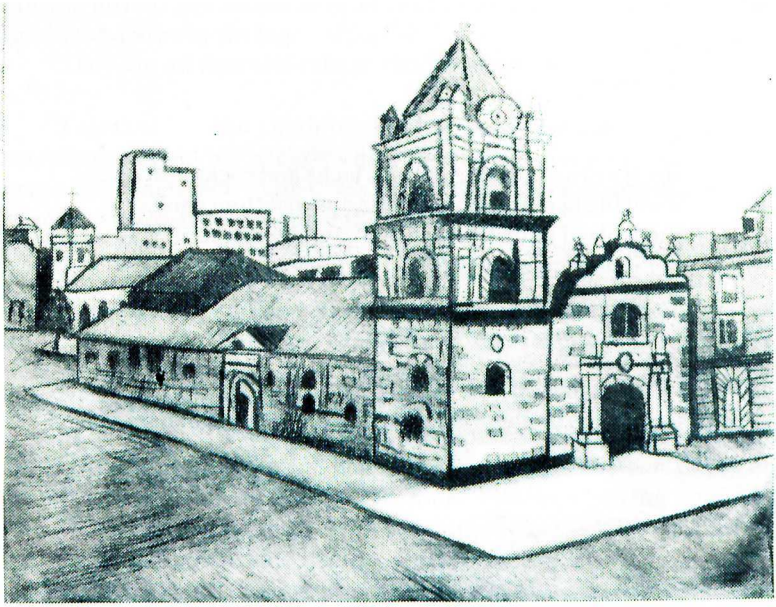
So many things I had planned to do for her! Not least among them the writing of an article to be published in this town which produced her, an article which would say to them, "See!? See what your native daughter has done! She has left you and has gone to Paris and has known Malraux, Gide, DeGaulle, Gertrude Stein! And I'll bet you never even knew it." Indeed, they hadn't. The *Indianapolis Star* devoted one corner of the obituary page to her death, tagged with the headline: "FORMER HOOSIER FLANNER DIES."

It was a very personal grief I felt that day. To mention it to anyone would be to elicit that doe-eyed "Who?" with which people so enjoy hurting one's feelings; on balance, I suppose they had no reason to know who she was. She had never been anything to them. To me she was a great lady. I spent the day in bookish, not uncomfortable sadness.

I remembered a letter that had, as if by conjury, appeared in a mailbox in a tired little town on a grimy summer day. This letter was a reply to a long, disjointed (but well-typed) epistle sent by a thirteen-year-old boy to the famous writer after he had seen her on television. His letter had been desperate; he hadn't known really what he wanted from her, except something—oh, please God! something!—from a world which had disappeared without telling him.

The reply was not a form letter, it was handwritten in green ink, and it was gracious. It told the boy that yes, the Twenties had been a marvellous age, but there had been many others. Why not go back fifty years to the time of Balzac? Never, she said, read anything because you think you *should* or because it happens to be popular at the time. He couldn't believe it. She had written to him, and he could share it with no one. Not for years would he meet anyone who would understand. . . .

In the autumn of 1978 that same boy had turned twenty, and had somewhere along the way metamorphosed into me; I felt, on that day that she died, the same void, the same inability to express myself as I had when I had received the letter from her years before. Never would I be able, I felt, to put it all together and have anyone know what I'm talking about. But I have done so here, and the effect is as incoherent on paper as it was in fact.



DEMOTED TO PENINSULA

Karen Kovacik

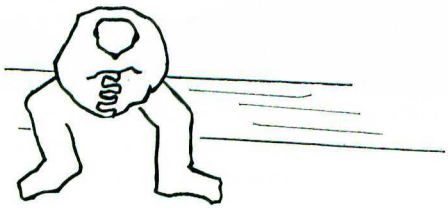
They say "no man is an island"
But I say this woman is:

Her house is a box
Her door has three locks
She sleeps upon rocks
She lives by the clocks

UNTIL—
She loves

THEN
She'll discard the box and the locks and rocks and clocks
She'll file her ambitions on the dusty bottom shelf
She'll bleed upon the carpet (Why, she'll even BE his carpet!)
She'll swallow all of him till there's no room for herself.

True, she'll grow by giving
But she'll smother all that's living
She'll make his thoughts her own and sink the isle of herself.



DIALOGUE

Gail N. Hunt

He wanted to explode with it, to make the walls fall down, but only a whimper extruded alongside the words.

"Rosie, the kids—"

"The children will be fine. You're better at managing them anyway. You can see what's best for *them*, I only impose my will on them. They'll be fine."

He watched her push and pat her fine light hair into place; years of experience at creating a beautiful image had made her an expert, and he still could not take his eyes from her if she was within range.

"Rose, they need you. Rachel doesn't know how to wear clothes right, like you do. She's only twelve. Jimmy's going to go through terrors with the girls if you're not around here as much. . . ." He took off his glasses to wipe away the fog.

"They are all four self-reliant kids, Harold. We've taught them to be."

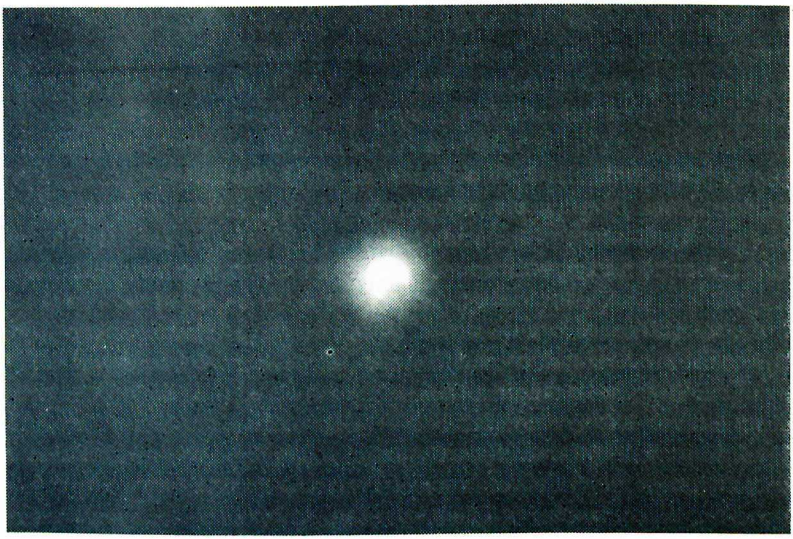
"Together." The high-pitched squeak escaped again from somewhere behind his necktie knot. He was not going to lose his composure this time. Her white dress brushed the door frame as she went ahead of him toward the front of the house.

"Everything I didn't already take is in these two suitcases; would you move them to the car for me? There's dirt under your fingernails."

He moved toward the suitcases automatically, then caught himself and straightened. "But what about the black stuff on the wall in the kitchen, and things like that? The kids can't handle that, can they? What about that?"

She swung her head away from the window. "They can't, but you can, Harold, or you can hire somebody to do it. And you can't keep me here with those everyday things. You know I've been leaving for a long time. This is just the last part of it." She turned back, gliding toward the door. "Look at the sunshine, such a nice day for March."

He clapped his hands together in order to keep from grabbing her as she opened the door and found her keys to the cream-colored Mercury waiting at the curb. It seemed like November to him.



NEW LIGHT

Ann Siefker

As clouds film the moon
to pitch darkness,
and night chokes
with black gloom,
as life falls in
to smother happiness,
then suddenly a wind from heaven
gusts clouds away
as a soft brush of a loving hand.
Trees spread apart the thick dark,
making room to breathe,
and the moon
becomes pure silver reflecting the sun
and the day to come.
Life fills with meaning
and hope abounds,
and I exclaim, "Father how wonderful you are!"

HERE COME THE EIGHTIES AT *OUR* SCHOOL, YEH

(Parting words to a pretty fair school)

Anonymous

I believe what I will do before I die probably is turn twenty-nine,
For I picture the soul's expanse by then to resemble a Montana plain,
Wide, Long, and Tall.
We have the souls of prairie dogs, kids,
And we have to show them every day—
Show your soul, show your smiling support where necessary, yeh.

Myself, I will attempt to drink of the magic cauldron and at so young,
And when off-duty will dress and go to the Vogue and seek a mate
And accept all advice, good and hearty,
From this impostor calling himself Radley Metzger (see last spring's issue)
There we will talk about journalist hicks, this is 1986,
Professor's wives running school, new Kings of the Things that count, some good, some bad, yeh.

The general thought, still, is that Kappas will be the same,
Holding a Ten o'clock Reunion Two-hour meeting to plan the
Real reunion for 2,000 A.D.
You've gotta wear them well, best visit them Tuesdays,
Hold a Kappa hand, yeh.

By 1986, we might all have these quiet street curves and the rust out of our blood for good,
And I picture the nation's expanse by then a bit resembling some
Bluish-gray mixture of 42nd-and-Broadway and Hampton,
Third floor East Schwitzer popping popcorn with Greenwich Village, south,
Radley and I standing by, and questioning the sanctity of women,
and puzzling why none of this had gone down on paper in our sophomore year.

But, hear this, Rare is the man who holds to his principles and
Seemingly nonexistent is the nation that can agree upon just one:
Which means we will have Charlie's Angels in boot camp by 1986
And disco Sermonette following the Tami Snyder show night after night,
And youngster souls like yours and mine looking through the window
And nonetheless trying and erring and pushing for a real decade
This time! Yeh! A real 80s! Without cultist intellects that somehow
Always pass for utter sobriety, yeh, without flat-voiced performing lords,
ooh-ooooh, without this God-awful dependency upon escape, alright, and, to compound the crime, upon self righteousness, waaahhhhh! Yeh!

But this try will be a try. So those of you about to hit 29, just wait, put your minds and eyes all around you and your hearts no place shy of Heaven, and do read a good short story now and then, and do get next to a Kappa, curl up with a good one, as it were, and come visit me and Radley at the Vogue, or come rap at my screen window. I should be here, and reasonably sincere. We should be nothing more, nothing less than friends. Yes.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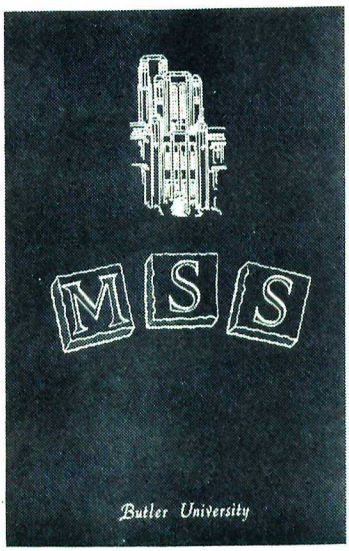
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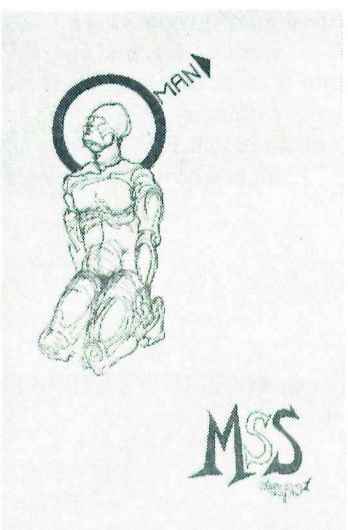

MAN
MSS

FREEDOM IS MY NAME

Fran Hart

Fly! my soul like the winged birds of the air,
searching for their freedom among the horizon.
Soar! my limitless passion like the sweet love song of a troubadour to his golden lady fair.
Freedom is my name, and I know no binds upon this earth and no man's victory is greater than mine.
I free men's troubled souls, and I march upon their minds, singing my victory song, knowing that soon they too will sing along!
Life is most precious when a man may lie to rest, knowing I have him within my grasp.
Yes! Freedom is my name, and I shall forever reign o'er the hearts of those who dare their souls to fly. . . .

THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE

Fran Hart

Like a raindrop falls upon the newly wet grass,
the eye can see and the ear may hear
the dripping of the last drops of rain.
The stars in their orbits and galaxies
hold to themselves an unknown quantity
of beauty and mystery.
The breeze dances among the flowers,
flaunting and playing with the wind.
Even though I can not see it, I
know that it is there.
Like the stillness of the night when
I am alone, nothing is there but my
thoughts and my conscience. . . .

SOMEONE OF THE OPEN AIR

Tanya Beyer

Our canoe guide was a girl as strong, I imagine, as a similarly-sized boy. She was twenty-one and twenty-two the summers when I knew her—Mary Lea Buchan, or Buck, or Squaw. No one in either canoe party could so briskly tote packs and canoes over a portage trail, or so determinedly heave a tipped spar out of our channel.

Red-skinned and with short hair of taffy-brown, she was a round-faced chunk, a citizen of the Soo, Ontario, and a winter student majoring in physical education and sociology at Windsor University. She could sleep at will in canoe or tent, or be as energetic as a CPR locomotive. Once her sleeping bag lay spilled on the shoulder of our granite-island camp in Wenebegon Lake, and at mid-morning it was a comical surprise as the wadded, supposedly uninhabited sack unbent and hatched Mary Lea. Twelve hours ago in the midnight gloom of this first camp, she had pattered around from cook-fire to every tent, courteously helping out at each of these construction sites.

Songs by the book-full she led on rivers and on windy lakes where the canoes skimmed with tent flies on paddles for sails. The songs were old, hilarious, and at their best—sexual. Sometimes she slouched, with the canoe at the will of the river current, and herself without motion except to breathe and to change the intensity of her silent scowl. This would be interrupted with a curt bit of advice to a paddler, or a startling compliment to a girl: "You have a beautiful skin;" or to soughing pines, or, at late day, to a white-throated sparrow in sorrowful song. About the sparrow she kept having to ask: "What's he called again?"

She boasted probably truthfully about successful pranks, her fixing of bullies, and her victories in games. In camps she dramatized while helping cook, striking mad athletic poses while narrating: "It's all in the neck . . . the shoulders . . ." and telling yarns of college revelry.

Down a rapids she paddled with vim, maybe like a voyageur, and counseled the bowman: "Draw! Paddle hard! 'Atta girl—see that? Left, okay?—see those vees? Okay, out you get, on the double!" Out of the rapids, as we rushed over the haystacks, she crowed: "I love that whitewater, don't you?" Before a log jam she chose whether to potage or to drag and float our canoes over, and directed us through the best

When tenting with her, I remember her sombreness. In 1975 I'd met her family—mother, unsmiling father, unwedded sister with her baby. Before we slept one night on the Goulais trip, Mary Lea talked about quarrels between her parents and grandparents, and about how it hurt to lose Grandfather. She also described wounds that she, a rather frank rebel, had had from her fellow-citizens. We compared our behavior and aspirations, and Mary Lea argued against a couple of my statements which were not beliefs, but a fifteen-year-old's wishy-washy proposals about humanity. "Everybody has something good," she avowed, "nobody is all evil." One can sometimes feel that the wickedest criminals are exceptions, but I remember Mary Lea partly for her firm opinion that we all come with our merits. From a person so earthy, so hearty and practical, but reserved and pensive too, the declaration seems especially believable.

CANDY STORE

Emmy Leeman

The second graders got to go uptown by themselves. This didn't mean much to the town kids, of course, but it sure made us country kids eager.

I got me a penny from my dad for picking potato bugs. I didn't want it tied in the corner of my handkerchief because I liked feeling it in the soft part of my hand, even if it did make my hand sweat.

Noon recess, which was a long time coming that day, was time enough for me to go. I breathed in the sweet-smelling air before I could see the store. The brick building had used to be a barber shop. It was whitewashed, with one big window. The floor was dark, oiled boards and one squeaked when I stepped across the doorway.

The candy was lined up in dozens of long even rows in two big glass cases. There were chocolate slow-pokes, black licorice "nigger babies," dark and light squares of creamy fudge, and even some that looked exactly like strawberries. I looked at the blue and pink "kewpie doll' candies that melted as soon as they touched my tongue. And yes, there were the red, spicy, cinnamon squares that were so hot and sweet that they made tears come to my eyes when I sucked them. The lemon balls were uneven with damp sugar sticking to them. I could feel the water starting at the back of my mouth and I wondered if she'd let me choose the lemon drops myself.

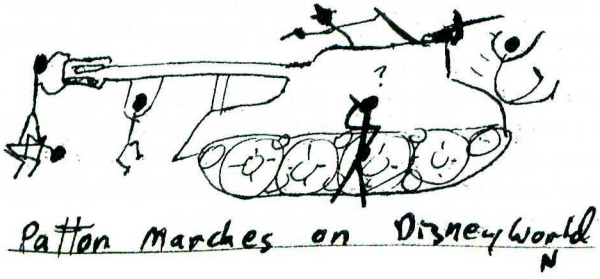
"Well?" said Miss May. She sounded mad but I didn't think she was because she sounded the same way, dry and hard, even when she said "Good Morning" to Father Weller on Sundays.

I didn't believe she could have eaten any of the delightful sweet drops that she made. Looking through the glass, I could see her skinny arms and bony shoulders. Her fingers had big bumps on each joint and they looked like they had been soaked in water. There was a red sore-looking burn on one wrist.

I knew she wanted me to choose, and so I leaned over and pulled my ankle sock down. I looked a long time at my mosquito bite. When I heard her stop tapping her spatula, I raised up and pointed to the cinnamon squares. She put five of them in the little, brown sack and was turned around stirring something bubbling before I got to the door.

I walked slower going back to school, dragging my heels the way that made Mom yell. Holding the sticky, red square carefully and sucking on one corner, I could smell the metal on my hand.

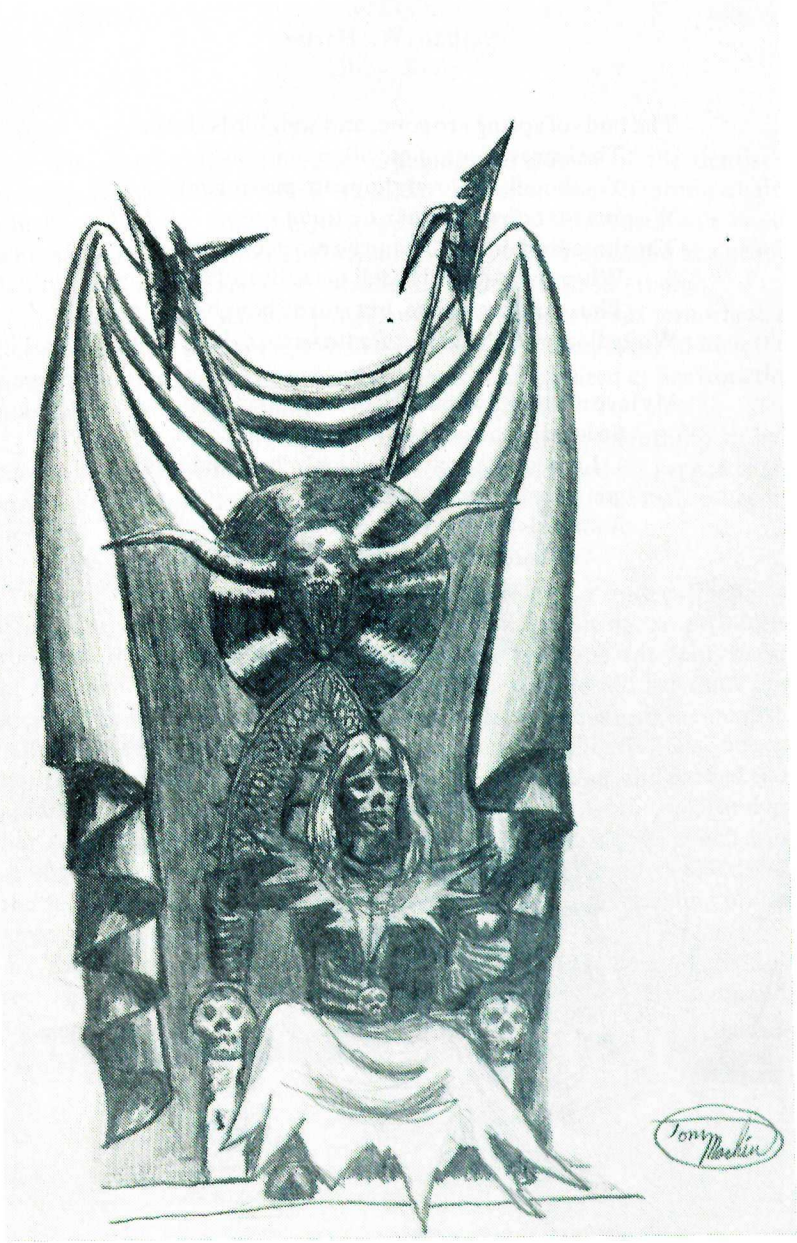
I wished I'd picked the lemon balls.



PRIME DAY

Andrea Swinton

The dour day is fully ripe
with ghastly winds blowing ah-h just right
with the wind in our hands
we guide the clouds the way we can
The sky is blue and the grass . . . green
The sun revealing with lovely means
Far beyond the sun within
soars the fast but ghastly winds


Tom Machin

THE BUDS OF SPRING ARE GONE

Nathan W. Harter

The buds of spring are gone, and songbirds sleep;
The leaves of summer wither in the dust.
Yet though the lovely hues are passing, must
We pine for fallen charms we cannot keep?
The threads of dearest loving lie too deep,
Where beauty finds itself in moth and rust.
Thus autumn's bare, but sturdy boughs I trust
While flowers fall and Nature turns to reap.

My love is steadfast though the boom has died,
So let me see no slowly swelling tear
Lament the youth so quickly lived and lost,
For I am here forever at your side:
A forest is a forest through the year,
And true hearts never falter in the frost.

UNTITLED

Libby Kelly

The vinyl chair squeaked, cracking the silence of the dentist's waiting room. Shirley Stark huddled further in the offending chair, blushing fiercely. She wanted to go in the bathroom but didn't know where it was. She didn't want to ask her mother. Shirley stared at a grimy Jello advertisement and tried to pretend her mother wasn't there.

The magazine felt damp and oily in her hands; it was torn where a nervous patient had shredded the back cover. Shirley tried to turn the page without making any noise. Big, black letters glared at her from the magazine. "Are You in Charge of Your Own Life?"

"What'cha reading, hon?" her mother asked, breathing in her face. Shirley flipped the magazine over so she could read the ragged front cover. She wished her mother would let her go to the dentist's office by herself.

"Do you have a pen, Ma?"

Mrs. Stark fumbled in her shiny vinyl purse and extracted a chewed-up pencil. Shirley took the pencil without lifting her eyes from the quiz. By the end of the third question, she knew she wasn't in charge of her own life. She didn't need a magazine quiz to tell her that. She kicked her legs up under the chair, hating her mother and the dentist. All dentists had hairy arms. They remained her of spiders. She squeezed her eyes together until the letters on the page blurred and looked like spiders, too. Rows and rows of spiders marching across the page and up her arms. She drew more spiders on the page, clutching her pencil even as they seemed to swarm on her fingers. The more spiders she drew, the more spiders sprang to life, warm and hairlike and crawling up her arms.

Shirley sensed they were friendly creatures, and by now she couldn't see her mother, or the receptionist, or her moving, writing hand.

Everything looked fuzzy, like a spider's hairy leg. She made more spiders, conscious only of the warmth of the room and the motion of her hand. Spiders and spiders and spiders and. . . .

"Shirley! They're calling your name." Her mother jerked Shirley to her feet and walked on into the examining room. She stood staring at the page, looking for the spiders. Neat rows of markings lined the empty margins, well-spaced and symmetrical. She knew she had drawn them, but she didn't know what they were. Ripping the page from the magazine, Shirley glanced furtively around the deserted waiting room and stuffed the torn paper in an empty wastecan. It lay at the bottom of the wastecan, tiny and white against the dark green metal. Shirley pulled some tissues from her coat pocket and threw them on top of the lone paper.

The next day in geometry class, Shirley was drawing an octagon in the margin of her homework assignment. An octagon is almost like an inside-out spider, and it reminded her of the spiders in the dentist's office. Shirley knew her mother hadn't seen them, but that didn't mean they weren't crawling on her arms and her face. Her mother could seldom see the same things that Shirley could. Besides, she'd drawn the spiders, and by some power in her own small hand had forced them off the page and into life. It was very confusing to have such a great, secret power, and a little bit thrilling.

The teacher's voice droned, thin and tinny like a whine from a distant radio. Shirley thought she might fall asleep. If she fell asleep, her chin would hit the desk with a resounding thump and she'd slide out of her chair onto the linoleum floor. Maybe no one would notice.

The figures on the paper were blurred now, and Shirley felt compelled to pick up her pencil and draw more octagons. As soon as she drew one, its insides turned out and a tiny spider crawled off the page. She thought her arms and face must be covered with a moving sheet of spiders, but she could barely see them. They felt soft and warm like soapy bathwater. She bore down on the pencil, and the spiders became thicker and blacker. Crack! The thin lead point snapped and Shirley was jolted back into the classroom. The spiders had vanished and she felt cold.

"Can you do number seven for us, Shirley?" the teacher asked, pretending he hadn't seen the spiders. Everyone in the class turned around and peered at her, blushing at her desk in the empty back row. Shirley stared hard at her assignment, but the answers were smudged and covered by the same black markings she had made in the dentist's office.

"Uh . . . no," she stammered. "I don't have it done."

"I'll talk to you after class, Shirley."

The bell rang an eternity later, and Shirley stumbled past the teacher and through the door, clutching her paper in her sweating palm. No one said hello as she ran to her locker, but this was not unusual, and Shirley was grateful today for her bland obscurity. Breathing heavily, she shoved her books in her locker and stood for a moment, darting her eyes up and down the crowded hallway. Too many people were around. She ducked into a restroom and locked herself in a stall, carefully placing the paper in the bottom of her purse where no one else would see it.

Later that evening, after her parents had gone to sleep, Shirley pulled the shades in her bedroom and took the paper from her purse. She stared at the jumble of markings. They look like heiroglipits, Shirley thought, but maybe that wasn't the right word. She turned the paper slowly in her hands, noticing that certain marks seemed to appear more frequently than others. The markings could be words in a language that no one else understood. She'd read about that in a magazine once, and it made her shiver when she realized that not even she understood what was written.

It happened again, the next day in class. Shirley was daydreaming about Christmas when she felt the spiders on her fingers. They'd spilled from her book and swarmed across the desktop, dropping off the edge like lemmings. Following their path with her pencil, Shirley made row after row of spider-like markings on the gleaming desktop. Soon it was covered, crammed with the strange black scrawl, and Shirley dropped to the floor and chased the spiders across the linoleum squares. She was underneath the chair, lying on her stomach, when the teacher saw her.

"Shirley! Are you hurt?" He scrambled to the back of the classroom. She stared blankly at his shoes through a tangle of hair. The tile felt cool against her cheek, and Shirley wished she would go to sleep and the shoes would disappear. Maybe she could die if she tried hard enough.

"Can you hear me, Shirley?" The teacher bent over the desk, peering myopically at her face. She kicked his leg and slid away on her stomach. No one moved for a very long time; Shirley merely held her breath, trying to die. Finally the bell rang, and he hustled the tittering students out of the room, shutting the door behind them.

"Are you sick?" he asked, staring at the jumble of markings on her desk.

"No."

"Did you take a drug, Shirley?"

She shook her head emphatically, suddenly noticing the tiny circles of moisture that her breath left on the black linoleum. She opened her mouth wider, trying to make the circle grow, but saliva dripped from her lip. She felt naked on the floor.

"I was doodling," she said, clawing the legs of her chair as she climbed to her feet. "I was doodling." She ran from the classroom.

Shirley went home and told her mother she had a stomachache. Mrs. Stark cooked poached eggs and toast, and let her stay in bed for two days. When she went back to school, the dean of women called Shirley to her office.

"Shirley, what happened to you in class the other day? Can you tell me?" the dean asked, smiling at the girl who was huddled in the chair.

"I don't know," Shirley stammered. She didn't want to tell her about the spiders. The dean might think she was crazy or stupid. "I don't know."

"Shirley, I looked at your desktop. What were you writing?"

"Wasn't writing. I was drawing . . . I think."

The dean walked out from behind her desk and took both of Shirley's hands in her own.

"Was it a code, Shirley? Were you making up letters? They look like letters. Were you playing a game?"

"No game. I thought they were spiders," Shirley said.

"Spiders?" The dean raised her eyebrows.

Shirley nodded and burst into tears. "Sometimes I see spiders. I-I want to draw them. But when I don't have to draw them anymore, they don't look like spiders." She paused. "I ruined the desk, didn't I?"

The dean told her it was okay and sent her back to class. A few days later, she called Mrs. Stark and told her that Shirley was sick. She suggested the name of a doctor that Shirley could go to, a psychologist who helped teenagers, and Shirley went to see him. Her mother went with her and insisted on driving the car.

The doctor had a large photograph of the desktop in his office, but he made Mrs. Stark leave before he showed it to Shirley. He explained that she had written words in another language.

"Do you know what a dead language is, Shirley?" he asked.

"It's one that nobody uses anymore, isn't it?"

"Right. I thought at first your writing might be an intricate code, so I sent it to the University to have someone there look at it. They told me it was an ancient Hebrew alphabet. Where did you learn such a thing, Shirley?"

"Hebrew? I don't know any Hebrew," she said, blushing. "I took Spanish last year. Could it be Spanish?"

He stared at her, confused. The dean had given him some sketchy background when she recommended Shirley to the clinic. Apparently she was a mediocre student, shy and quiet. It was amazing how she could learn a language with such alacrity, and a dead language at that.

"No, it's not Spanish, it's Hebrew . . . but such an ancient form that nobody at the University even knows how to translate it." He paused. "Have you been around much Hebrew, Shirley?"

"I don't know any Hebrew!" She glared at him. "I don't I don't I don't."

The next few sessions he tried every test he could think of from polygraph to hypnosis, and finally concluded that she didn't know a word of Hebrew. Twice she saw spiders and went into a trance, frantically scrawling words on the piece of paper that he'd put in front of her. She confessed that she was seeing spiders all of the time, at least once a day. The psychologist sent her writing to a university in Europe where a man knew the dead language and said he could translate it before Christmas. It was December third when the psychologist sent the papers.

Shirley lived in a small, lazy town, and soon everyone knew of the writing. Armchair historians marveled at the potential import, and

churchmen argued about the religious implications. Her Spanish teacher thought she was a prodigy and everyone else merely awaited the translator's verdict. The newspaper ran a front-page story on Shirley's gift, complete with pictures and a quote from her mother. Shirley was still seeing spiders, almost every day. She tried to see the spiders now, because she firmly believed herself to be God's messenger to the modern world.

The days of uncertainty dragged on, and Shirley ceased doing homework. There was nothing that high school could teach a god-like creature. People seemed to be looking at her with more respect; she got invited to a few parties. After two weeks, her mother placed a costly call to the translator.

"Hello . . . this is Charlotte Stark." Shirley stood a foot away, watching her mother's face. "You're done . . . well," her mother laughed triumphantly, "what did my daughter say?"

The next few moments Shirley remembers vividly, loud and bright in her mind like a slow-motion movie. She gets sick, deep in her stomach, when she lets her thoughts slip from the spiders and relives those moments.

"Gibberish?" her mother said incredulously. "Nonsense syllables?"

Mrs. Stark listened intently to the faraway drone and hung up. She glared at her daughter. "Fine talent you have there, Shirley. You're wasting half your time scrawling nonsense syllables in a dead language. Out of all the garbage you wrote, there wasn't even one sentence that made any sense." She shook her finger at Shirley. "There wasn't even one word."

Shirley felt the spiders again, swarming up her face. They covered her eyes and she couldn't see her mother anymore. So I really am crazy, she thought, crazy, crazy crazy. She felt safe, hidden beneath the sheet of spiders.

They haven't deserted her yet, and it's been almost thirty years. Shirley sits in a sunlit hospital, writing page after page of nonsense syllables on torn sheets of old newspapers. Her wastebasket is always full.

Refutation of
Zeno's Paradox

N

A Cup of Tea

A cup of green tea
reflecting the stream of my daughter's hair
explodes its fresh green fragrance into the
spring mist

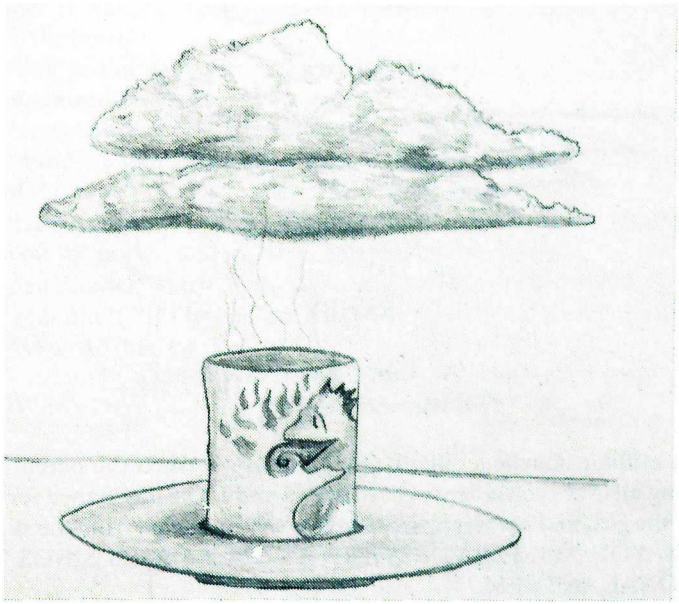
A touch of wind sways our time
into innocent days
across the Pacific Ocean
in my native country
where every gentle aspect of life was cherished
with an aesthetic celebration

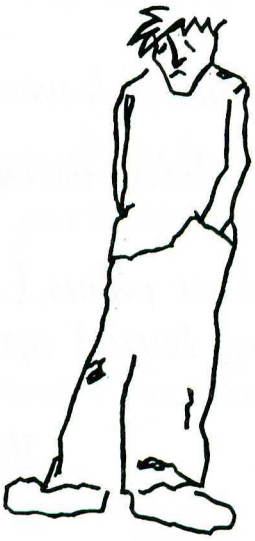
A cup of clay, a myth of the earth, the origin of
our birth
wind, a legend of our reverberating with an
infinite universe

A cup of warm tea
gleaming by the spring light
reflecting sky
embracing shadows of leaves

My little daughter holds the cup of clay in her innocent hands
When she opens her palms, I see the blossoming of my buried spring time

Yoko Chase





RANBY

Libby Kelly

A million, maybe a zillion, fuzzy moths swarmed the porch light, stepping all over each other to get to the warmth. The boy leaned forward to kiss the girl, and as their lips touched, a voice boomed from the sky. "WILL YOU ALL PLEASE STAND AS JIM NABORS SINGS THE NATIONAL ANTHEM."

The boy and the girl jumped apart. Shrill music began to blare. "Oh say can you see by the donserly light. . . ."

"Raaandee!" the girl shrieked, charging inside the house. Randy stumbled through the slippery grass, "Raandee," he could hear his sister and her boyfriend run through the darkened house, giggling. Randy tripped and lay blissfully dizzy on the cool ground. His sides were sore from laughing.

The boyfriend drove away, and Randy waited in the grass, staring at the moths. Where did they go in the daytime? He'd never seen them before. He tried to look away, but all he saw was a yellow spot where the light bulb had been. After a very long time, he climbed up the roof and took down the loudspeaker. He carefully rolled up the wire he'd hidden along the side of the house; the tape recorder had shut off automatically. Randy unhooked it from the main control panel and listened to the rest of the "Star Spangled Banner." When every scrap of evidence was packed away, he went to bed. He left the porch light turned on so the moths wouldn't get cold.

"Did you kids behave yourselves last night?" his father asked at breakfast. Randy didn't hear him; he was listening to his cereal crackle and pop. It was strangely quiet this morning, and he put his ear very close to the bowl.

"You've got milk on your earlobe, weirdo," his sister said, "and besides, oatmeal doesn't make noises."

Randy heard her, but he kept listening anyway.

"Randy, c'mon. Eat your breakfast," his father shouted to the front page of the newspaper.

"Daddy, Randy did the funniest thing last night. He rigged up a switch on the porch, and when we stepped on the doormat . . . the "Star Spangled Banner" started playing from a speaker on the roof."

"You did?!" his father looked across the table at Randy, grinning. "How'd you do this one, kiddo?"

". . . . and Dave nearly died," his sister said, rolling her eyes.

"Who's Dave . . . and what was he doing here?"

"Daaaddyee . . . tell him, Mother," she wailed. They were all ignoring him again. Randy dipped the wrong end of his spoon in the cold oatmeal and tried to write his name. ЯaNФby . The letters looked sick and crippled in the lumpy oatmeal.

"Randy, you wore that shirt yesterday," his mother looked at him for the first time that morning. "Go put on the shirt that mommy laid out for you. After all, it's the first day of school."

He shuffled out of the kitchen, stopping on the stairs to pretend he was a famous mountain climber. Only ten more feet, boys, and Mount North Pole is all yours. He tugged at the bannister, pulling his body closer to the top by slow, painful inches. Gusts of icy wind were blowing in his face, and he closed his eyes, listening to the bark of the wild seals.

"He ALWAYS wears that shirt, Mother, ALWAYS . . . I don't think he'll wear the others because he's too klutzy to button them."

Randy scaled the top of the mountain and fell to the ground on his belly. Snakes were everywhere in the North Pole, long white snakes that looked like icicles. He crawled to his room, stopping every few seconds to shake his feet and make rattling noises.

"Randy, hurry up!" The seals were restless. They might bite him if he missed the bus.

A little while later, the bus screeched to a halt in front of the school. Randy hunched in his seat after the other children had swarmed from the folding doors. He slid further and further down on the slippery vinyl seat, until his bottom nearly touched the floor and his back began to hurt. The bus driver saw Randy on the floor and made him leave the bus.

"Who's your teacher, Randy?" a girl called from the steps of the school. He pretended to be looking for cracks in the sidewalk.

"Randy flunked," another girl giggled. "He's gotta repeat the whole second grade." They whispered and walked away.

Randy waited outside until amost all the children had left the playround, and then he staggered inside the school. He was a war hero, limping home from Russia. His left leg was in shreds, and boy, would they be sorry they shot him. He limped past his teacher, Mrs. Rectangle and collapsed in the nearest seat in the front row. Mrs. Rectangle had made him sit in the front row last year, after he rolled snowballs of white paste and threw them at a girl's hair.

"Hello, class. I'm Miss Ratanga," she said, passing around pencils and paper with big blue lines. "I want everyone to write their names . . . big . . . on the upper left hand corner. Then . . . let's all write a paragraph about our summer vacations."

After a lot of noisy chair-scraping, twenty pencils began to scratch across paper. Randy scrunched his eyes together and tried to remember which side was left. He was left . . . no, maybe right-handed. His father said he was "ambodexters;" this meant he could write equally sloppy with either hand. By now, Randy couldn't even remember where she'd said to write his name, so he gripped the pencil and wrote R-a-n-b-y in the middle.

Ranby. No. Randby. Яandy. The paper was smudged and dirty. He pressed the pencil hard and wrote "Ranby." Maybe that was right. He closed one eye and wrote "Dobson." Randy Dodson . . . that was his name.

"Almost done, class? Mrs. Rectangle came and stood behind him like a big, black tree trunk. He smiled at her proudly.

"Rand-dee," she said, pointing to his name. "Raaandee Doddd-son." She looked very big, and much uglier than he had remembered. "Turn the 'D' around, Raaandee."

She sounded like a goat. Randy was staring at his name, making up a story.

"My name's Ranby, Ranby Dobson. Nice to meet you," he said respectfully.

Mrs. Rectangle's mouth made a tight little "O," and Randy wasn't sure whether she was going to laugh or cry. Instead, she looked at her watch and said, "Class, line up alphabetically for recess."

Randy wandered from his seat, making tiny bubbles with his saliva. Ranby Dobson would stand in front of Randy Dodson because "B" came before "D". He pretended Randy was absent, sent away to a prison for people who couldn't read.

"Aren't you s'pose to be in third grade?" the girl in front of Randy asked.

"Nope. I'm Ranby Dobson. I'm new 'cause my parents just moved here from Mars."

"Ranby . . . that's not a name." She giggled and turned away.

"Kickball!" Mrs. Rectangle yelled when they got outside. "Well count off in one's and two's."

Randy stood in the long line of boys and girls, making up a story. He was Ranby Dobson, from Washington, Mars. His turn came, and he called out "two."

"Yuck. Not you, weirdo." The nearest number two made a face at Randy. "You can't even kick the ball."

Randy shoved his hands in his pockets and grinned. He would tell the class he was from Mars, where they shot wild robots during recess. He would tell the teacher that his mother was short and green and never taught him how to read. Maybe then they'd understand why Randy was different. It was a good lie, a lie that Randy had thought of before. Last year, a girl came to the school from California; she'd even been on television. Everyone liked her.

When the two's went out to field, Randy hid behind the corner of the building. He almost hoped he'd be missed, but he knew no one would see he was gone. He could hear them laughing on the field, and even Mrs. Rectangle was yelling "Go Stevie." Randy slipped inside the door of the junior high building and ran down the stairs to the dim basement. There, in the school workshop, the big machines slept during recess. He skidded on the cement floor and stumbled through the doorway.

"Well . . . Randy! How was your summer?" The shop teacher, Mr. Anderson, grinned at the disheveled boy.

"Great. I fixed five televisions and put a CB radio in my neighbor's car." Randy leaned forward and whispered, "He paid me twenty dollars and my mother let me keep it."

"You ought to go into business, young man," Mr. Anderson said, getting down from the tall, metal stool. "Come over here. I want to show you what I'm working on."

Randy bent down, staring at the guts of the radio set. Wires spilled across the metal back in shiny blues, reds, and greens. It was a mess.

"Do you see what I'm doing?" Mr. Anderson asked, squatting beside Randy. He nodded solemnly. He understood electronics better than anything, better than anyone, even in the junior high. No one else even knew what the word "electronics" meant, but worse than that, no

one really cared. Once, he'd brought a home-made radio to Show and Tell, but he got embarrassed and couldn't explain it very well. The class started laughing and he just sat down.

"Does your teacher know where you are?" Mr. Anderson said.

"Yes, n-no." He didn't want to lie to Mr. Anderson. "But I didn't want to play kickball. I wanted to come out here and help you."

"Scoot back outside, Randy. Kickball will be good for you."

Good for you. They said that about broccoli and booster shots. Last summer, his dad locked him out of his workshop in the garage for a whole week because it would be good for him to make friends and play football. Randy spent the week talking to his dog in the bushes.

He walked back outside, taking one step backward for every three steps foward. As soon as he reached the playground, it was time to go inside.

"Reading groups," Mrs. Rectangle trilled. "We have three . . . the Eagles, the Lions, and the Sloths. As you become a better reader, you can worm your way up to the Eagles."

Randy stopped listening. He knew he would be a Sloth. He was a Sloth all last year, and by June there was only one other Sloth left, a boy named Harold who wet his pants in class. Harold didn't have a left eye, and Randy hated sitting in the circle next to him.

Mrs. Rectangle's voice droned on like a lawnmower in the afternoon. Randy thought about his lie. He really might be from another planet, because he didn't remember how he was born. Probably everyone else in the whole world could remember their birth; after all, they were there, but Randy couldn't recall a thing. Maybe this meant he wasn't born. He could've been dropped from a flying saucer, and given to Earth as a present because he understood electronics. He liked that idea. His planet was so modern that they didn't need to read, write, or button their clothes. No one ever played kickball.

Randy went home and thought about Mars. He wanted to believe it. He sat on the front porch for the next three nights, underneath the moths, and watched for flying saucers.

"Randy, how come you write your name like that?" A girl pointed to the smudged "Ranby" on the corner of his paper. "It's not spelled right, silly." He didn't say anything. It was October, and Randy knew by now he wasn't a mere Earthling. He didn't tell the girl, though. He'd stopped telling people he was Ranby Dobson from Washington, Mars, because they said it was a stupid lie. It didn't matter what people thought, anyway. He knew he was different than the other children because he was a martian, and that was most important. He was almost certain he was a martian; sometimes, his skin almost looked green. He stopped doing homework. He thought about wires and radios all of the time. Finally, Mrs. Rectangle noticed, and visited his mother.

"He's sullen, uncooperative, and seems unwilling to learn," Miss Ratanga said, and Mrs. Dodson just nodded. She'd heard those terms before. "But I've been reading, and I think he might have a learning disability that makes him that way. Have you ever heard of dyslexia?"

Mrs. Dodson shook her head.

"Children with dyslexia transpose their letters, so d's look like b's or even q's or p's. This makes reading next to impossible. They can't organize their thoughts and movements . . . that's why Randy can't run very well. He can't remember where his feet are supposed to be."

"But he's so bright with his electronics!" Randy's mother said.

"That's what is so sad. A lot of exceptionally bright children have learning disabilities, but because they fail in school, they begin to believe they're stupid. Pretty soon a pattern of failure develops, and . . . well, it's tragic, really."

Miss Ratanga gave Mrs. Dobson the name of a clinic where they could test Randy for dyslexia. Randy hated the tests; he knew he was flunking, even though the man said there were no right or wrong answers. Later that night, his mother told him he had a learning disability, and his father said he was sick.

Randy sat outside on the front porch, thinking. He didn't believe he was sick, or crazy, and he didn't like those doctors. He knew he was special because he was from Mars. He hoped he was from Mars. He sat outside for a very long time, looking for a spaceship to fly home.

If I had a pen, what *wouldn't* I write!
I'd tell of the pen's unconquerable might!
I'd banish evils and set them aright!
But I haven't a pen, so I give you good-night.